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2 April 2005

Mr. Larry Butts
1507 Black Walnut Drive
San Marcos, CA 92078

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES LETTER REPORT

Project Name: Kawano Tentative Map - TM 5401 RPL3, ER 04-08-036

Dear Mr. Butts,

I have prepared the following letter report at your request and in response to the scoping letter from County staff dated November 9, 2004.

The Kawano project (see Figures and accompanying Vegetation Map) encompasses 10.27 gross acres in the North County Metro Subregional Plan Area (APNs 181-161-11 and 181-260-14), and is proposed for subdivision into eight residential lots and associated improvements.

THE PROJECT SETTING

The project site is situated north of San Marcos on the north side of Buena Creek Road, east of Starview Road (Figures 1 and 2). The approximate USGS coordinates of the site are 33°11'N, 117°12'W as determined on-site by Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver (San Marcos 7.5 minute series quadrangle, see Figure 3). The elevation of the site is between 600 and 700 feet. The property is bordered on the east, north and west by existing residential development, and on the south by Buena Creek Road and Buena Creek (see Figures 4 - 8 and the accompanying Vegetation Map).

The project site consists of a gentle south-facing slope that has a long history of use for row crop agriculture. County staff, in the November 9, 2004 scoping letter, raised concern regarding possible grading/clearing that may have taken place between 2002 and 2004, and the potential occurrence of wetlands on the site. Presumably, these concerns stem from information contained in the county's Geographical Information System (GIS) database. A forensic biological analysis was conducted to establish whether or not these concerns are merited.

METHODS

To conduct an assessment of biological resources, I visited the project site on 9 February 2005. The conditions for observation during the visit were excellent, with clear skies, no impediments to visibility, temperatures in the low 70s and no wind. The visit lasted from approximately 0745 to 0945. During my visit, I was able to examine the entire project site and

adjacent areas. My observations on-site were recorded as they were made, and form the basis of this report and the site Vegetation Map. Animals were identified using scat, tracks, burrows, vocalizations, or by direct observation with the aid of 10X42 Leica binoculars. Vegetation mapping was conducted in accordance with vegetation community definitions as described in Holland (1986) and Oberbauer (1996). In addition, vegetation mapping on-site was aided by the use of several digital color aerial photographs. On-site measurements were aided by the use of a Rolatape® Model 300 Distance Measuring Wheel. Measurements taken from the base map provided by the project engineer were taken with a LaSico® Model L-10 Compensating Polar Planimeter or Scale Master Classic® Digital Plan Measure. It should be noted that all vegetation community mapping is verified on the ground to the greatest degree possible in the absence of a systematic land survey. All vegetation areas and boundaries are estimates subject to final delineation by a professional land surveyor.

To conduct the forensic analysis, color digital aerial photographs in the files of the Aerial Fotobank were examined. Photographs of the site from every year from 1990 through 2004 were closely examined to determine the nature of vegetation and land uses.

RESULTS[1]

Based on soil conservation service maps (Bowman 1973), the soil types for the project site are Wyman loam, with 5-9% slopes (WmC), Las Posas fine sandy loam, 9-15% slopes, eroded (LpD2), and Las Posas fine sandy loam, 15-30% slopes, eroded (LpE2). Although a detailed soil analysis is beyond the scope of this report, on-site examination appeared to verify these principal soil types.

Site Survey

Vegetation on the project site at the time of my visit consisted almost entirely of soil that had been tilled in preparation for Row Crop (Holland Code 18320) agriculture (See attached Photographs). Along the periphery of the site there were scattered non-native herbaceous weeds, dominated by cheeseweed *Malva parviflora* and mustard *Brassica* sp. Along Buena Creek Road were several small coast live oaks *Quercus agrifolia*. These trees had trunks less than six inches DBH. Native vegetation is essentially non-existent on the site.

In the northern portion of the eastern parcel is an abandoned residence and associated parking area (Photograph 2). This area is shown as Urban / Developed (Holland Code 12000) on the Vegetation Map. In addition, a small area (0.28 acres) in the north-central portion of the site is characterized as Disturbed Habitat (Holland Code 11300). Examination of aerial photographs show that this area was long-used as a farm equipment and activity staging area. Currently, this area contains concrete rubble, drying citrus trees, and weedy herbaceous vegetation dominated by tree tobacco *Nicotiana glauca*.

[1] Scientific and common names for plant species are derived from The Jepson Manual, 1993; scientific and common names for birds from the A.O.U. Check-list of North American Birds, 1998.

No wetlands occur on or adjacent to the site. The nearest wetland is Buena Creek, located south of Buena Creek Road, south of the project site.

During the site survey a few common resident bird species were observed. These included Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna*, Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya*, Bushtit *Psaltriparus minimus*, American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*, and House Finch *Carpodacus mexicanus*. These species are all common residents of residential or agricultural settings.

The only mammals detected on the site were California Ground Squirrels *Spermophilus beecheyi* and Southern Pocket Gopher *Thomomys bottae*. Both are considered agricultural pest species. No reptiles or amphibians were noted, although common species likely occur on the site.

No sensitive plant or animal species were observed on the project site, and none are considered likely to occur.

Forensic Analysis and Findings

Examination of historic digital aerial photographs clearly shows that the entire site has a long history of row crop agricultural use. As noted above, photographs from every year from 1990 through 2004 show intense farming activity. As an example, a photograph from 1992 is reproduced for this report (Figure 8). The site was likely originally cleared for agriculture many years, if not decades, prior to regulation of such clearing. Concern regarding the potential grading/clearing of native vegetation between 2002 and 2004 is no doubt a result of interpretation of aerial imagery in the county's GIS database. The nature of the crops produced in those years (mature, dense green vegetation) likely led to the interpretation that native vegetation could be present. However, the low resolution of such aerial photographs, and the examination of images from only one or two years, can sometimes lead to such misinterpretations.

PROJECT IMPACTS

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that projects avoid or adequately mitigate for the loss of sensitive habitats and species. Such avoidance or mitigation enables County staff to make a finding that all project impacts are below or will be reduced to a level below significant and to issue a Negative Declaration or Mitigated Negative Declaration for the proposed project. In the case of this project, no sensitive habitats or species will be impacted. Table 1 shows the acreages of vegetation types on the project site.

Table 1. Vegetation Communities on the Project Site

PLANT COMMUNITY	ACREAGE ON-SITE	IMPACTED ACREAGE ON-SITE	IMPACTED OFF-SITE	ACREAGE PRESERVED ON-SITE	MITIGATION REQUIRED
Row Crops	9.47	9.47	N / A	N / A	0
Disturbed Habitat	0.28	N / A	N / A	N / A	N / A
Urban / Developed	0.52	N / A	N / A	N / A	N / A
TOTAL	10.27	9.47	0	0	0

No direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts to sensitive habitats or species will result from implementation of the project as proposed. No off-site impacts will result from implementation of the project as proposed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All available evidence indicates that the entire project site has been in active row crop agriculture for at least 15 years, and likely significantly longer. No evidence suggests or is consistent with the recent presence of native vegetation communities or wetlands.

In order to prevent any adverse impacts to off-site resources, it is recommended that adequate measures (Best Management Practices) be taken during construction to prevent runoff from entering the adjacent habitats. These measures should be sufficient to reduce any possible indirect impacts of the proposed project to a level well below significant.

The project as proposed will have no significant impacts as defined by CEQA, and will be in conformance with all other applicable regulations.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to conduct this work and prepare this report. Please contact me if I can provide any additional information or provide clarification.

Sincerely,

William T. Everett
Certified Biological Consultant

LITERATURE CITED

American Ornithologists' Union. 1998. Check-list of North American Birds. 7th edition. American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C. 829 pp.

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The Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California. Hickman, J.C. ed. 1993. University of California Press, Berkeley, xvii + 1400 pp.

Holland, R.F. 1986. Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California. California Department of Fish and Game, Sacramento, California. iii + 155 pp.

Oberbauer, T. 1996. Terrestrial Vegetation in San Diego County Based on Holland's Descriptions, San Diego Association of Governments, San Diego, CA. 6p.

U.S. Geologic Survey. 1967. 1975 Photo Revised. San Marcos Quadrangle 7.5 minute topographical map.

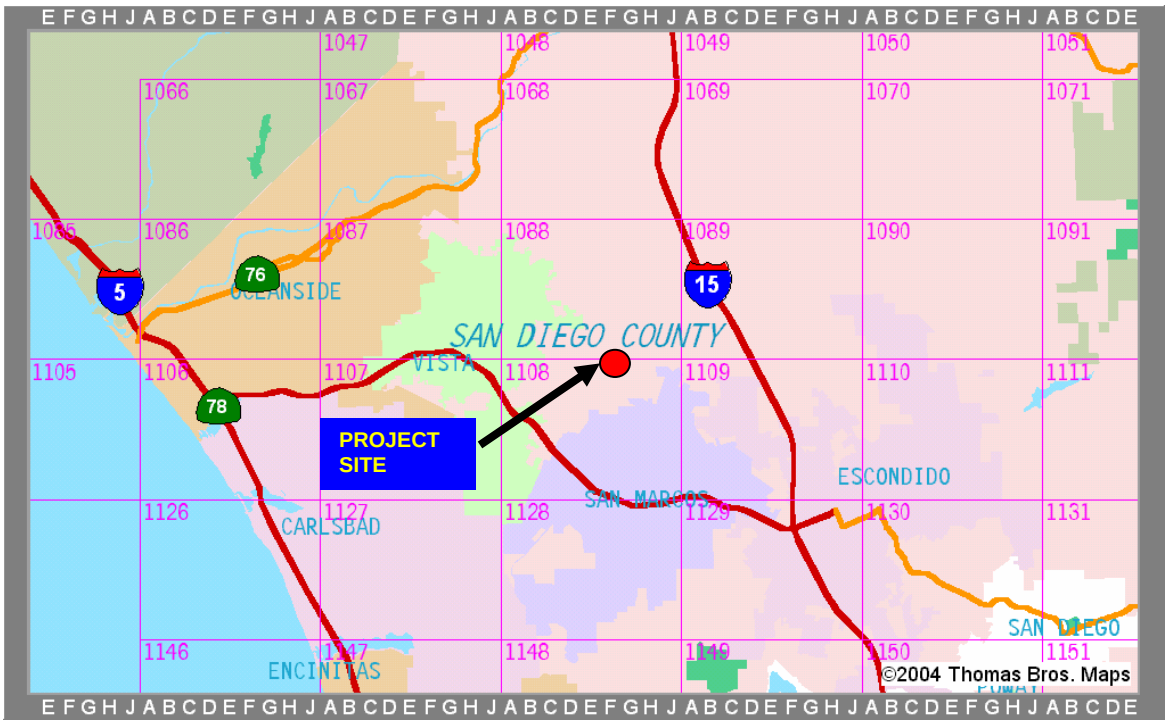

Figure 1. Location of project site in regional context. Thomas Bros. Map page #1108, E1.

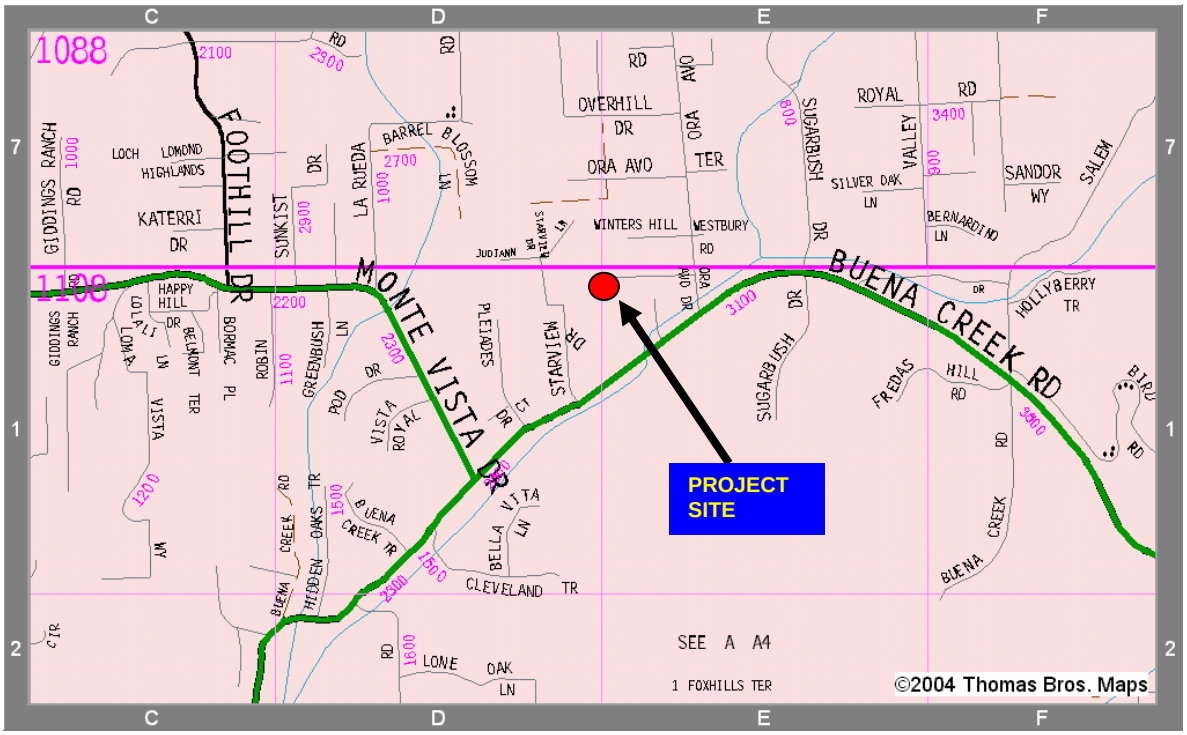

Figure 2. Detail location map of project site. Thomas Bros. Map page #1108, E1.

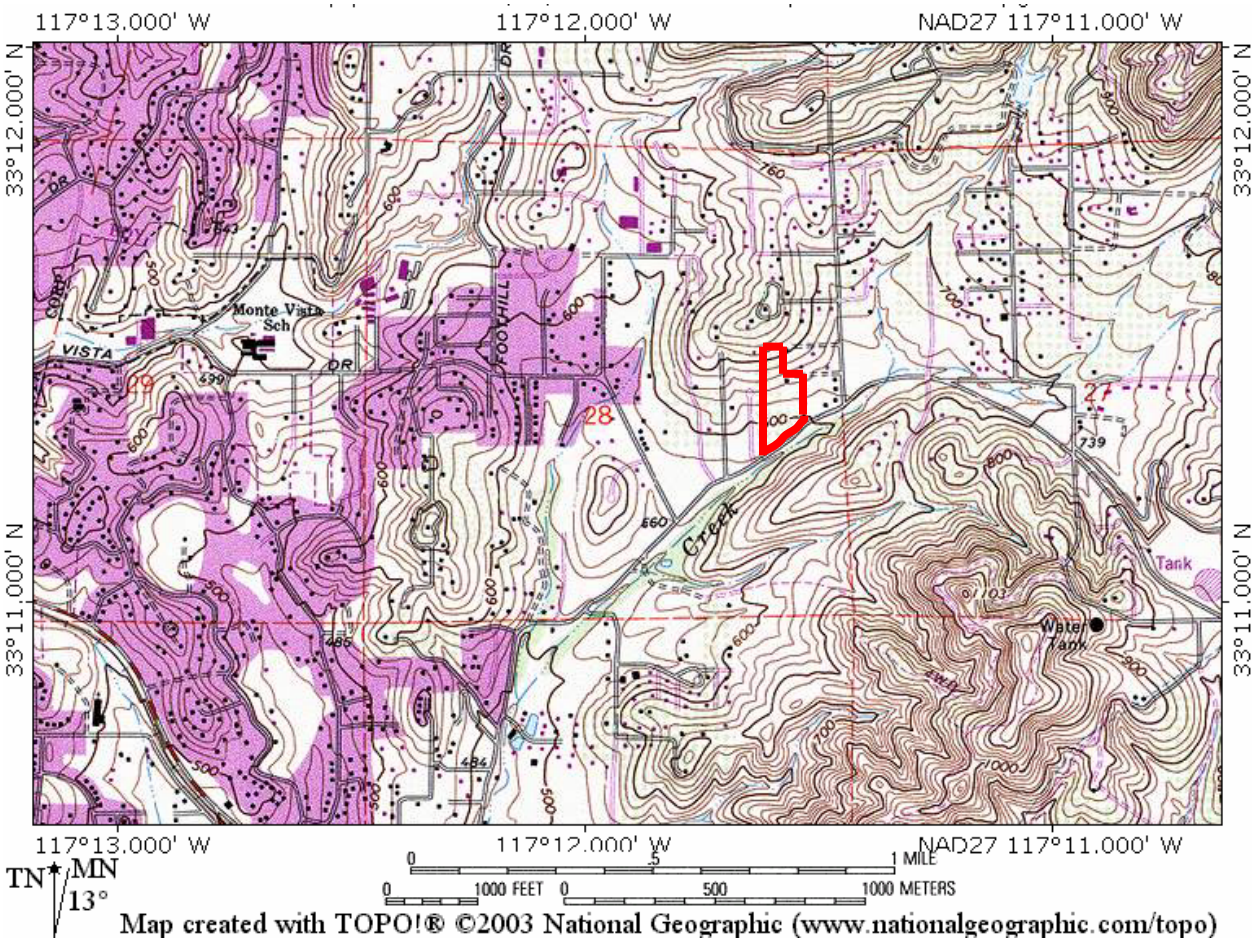

Figure 3. Topographical map showing project site location. Approximate project site boundaries are outlined in red. Taken from USGS San Marcos 7.5 minute series quadrangle.

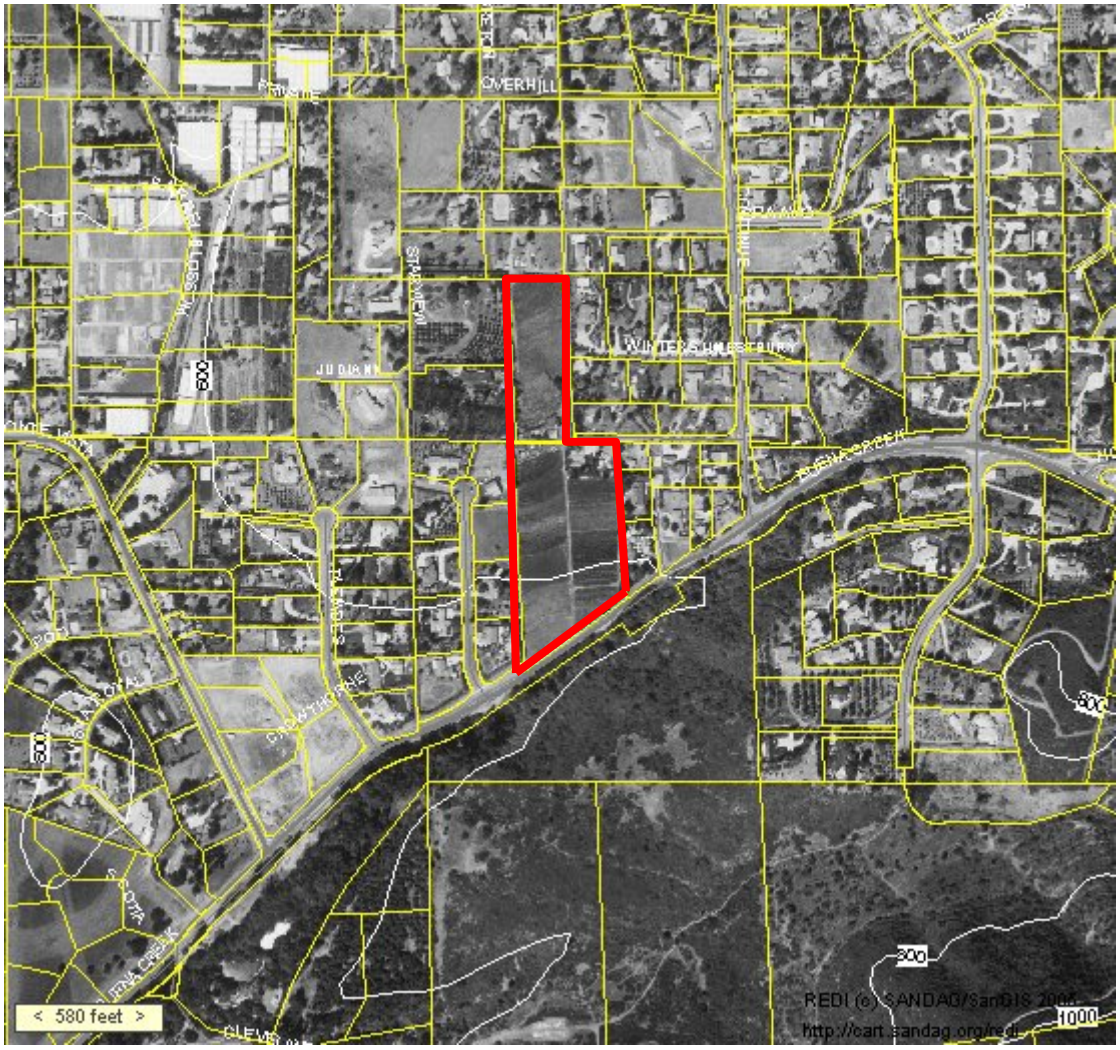

Figure 4. Satellite photograph of project site (photograph by SANDAG/SanGIS 2005), showing approximate parcel boundaries for project site (outlined in red, in center) and adjacent properties in yellow. Top of photo is true north.

Figure 5. Close-up satellite photograph of project site (photograph by SANDAG/SanGIS 2005), showing parcel boundaries for project site (outlined in red, in center) and adjacent properties in yellow. Top of photo is true north.

Figure 6. Color satellite photograph of project site taken in 2004. Approximate parcel boundaries for project site are outlined in red. Entire parcel is clearly in agriculture (Row Crops).

Figure 7. Oblique color satellite photograph of project site and vicinity taken in 2004.

Figure 8.

Digital aerial photograph of the project site taken in 1992. Obtained from the Aerial Fotobank. The entire parcel is clearly in agriculture (Row Crops).

Photograph 1. Looking northeast from the southwest corner of the project site.

Photograph 2. The abandoned house on the project site. This area is shown as Urban / Developed on the Vegetation map.

Photograph 3. Looking north from the south end of the project site.

Photograph 4. Looking northwest from the south end of the project site.